

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAMA 01606 131817Z
ACTION SS-25

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R 130630Z JUL 78
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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T MANAMA 1606

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, UNSC, XF, LE, SY, IS, BA
SUBJECT: LEBANON: BAHRAINI VIEWS

REF: A) STATE 172481 B) STATE 171142

1. DISCUSSED LEBANESE SITUATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
JULY 12, DRAWING HEAVILY ON REF (A) AND SELECTIVELY ON
REF (B). FONMIN, SHAIKH MUHAMMAD BIN MUBARAK AL-KHALIFA,
LISTENED CAREFULLY AND TOOK SOME NOTEKBM I GAVE PARTICULAR
STRESS TO NEED FOR THOSE WITH INFLUENCE AMONG LEBANESE

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PAGE 02 MANAMA 01606 131817Z

PARTIES AND WITH SYRIANS TO URGE UTMOST RESTRAINT AT
THIS DELICATE JUNCTURE.

2. SHAIKH MUHAMMAD SAID HE AGREED WITH USG
ANALYSIS AND WITH GENERAL COURSE OF ACTION WE ARE
FOLLOWING BUT HAD A FEW OBSERVATIONS WHICH HE SAID HE
HOPED I WOULD PASS TO WASHINGTON. FIRST, HE SAID HE HAD

HEARD RECENTLY FROM "VERY SENIOR" LEBANESE OFFICIAL THAT FEELING PERSISTS THERE THAT USG SUPPORTS CHAMOUN AND THAT THIS FEELING STEMS IN LARGE PART FROM FACT THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER IS GOL'S MAIN CHANNEL TO CHAMOUN. HE SAID HE HAD NO IDEA WHETHER THIS WAS TRUE OR NOT (I SAID I DID NOT EITHER) BUT FELT IT WAS WORTH PASSING TO USG SINCE IT IS KIND OF THING WHICH GIVES AMMUNITION TO THOSE WHO FEEL THAT, AT BOTTOM, USG FAVORS CHRISTIANS OVER OTHER LEBANESE.

3. SHAIKH MUHAMMAD ADDED AT ONCE THAT HE KNEW THIS IS NOT TRUE BUT THAT MANY ARABS BELIEVE IT. HE URGED USG TO MAKE THIS CLEARER. I SAID HE WAS OF COURSE CORRECT: USG IS FIRMLY AGAINST PARTITION AND FAVORS OUTCOME WHICH RESTORES LEBANON TO FULL SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL UNITY. FONMIN ADDED THAT FROM POINT OF VIEW OF GULF ARABS IT IS CHRISTIAN LEBANESE NOT LEBANESE MUSLIM LEFTISTS OR PALESTINIANS WHO ARE NATURAL ALLIES IN TERMS SHARED VALUES OF FREE ENTERPRISE AND ANTI-COMMUNISM.

4. SHAIKH MUHAMMAD SAID HE WANTED TO URGE USG TO REACT MORE STRONGLY TO ISRAELI INTERVENTIONIST THREATS AND ISRAELI ACTIONS LIKE OVERFLIGHTS OF BEIRUT. FAILURE OF USG TO DO SO IN RECENT DAYS -- IN STRONG TERMS -- FUELS FEELING AMONG MANY IN ARAB WORLD THAT USG REALLY SUPPORTS
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PAGE 03 MANAMA 01606 131817Z

ISRAELI POLICY IN LEBANON, PARTICULARLY ISRAELI ALLIANCE WITH SOME CHRISTIAN GROUPS. HE URGED THAT WE TELL ISRAELIS AND MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO EFFECT THAT WHILE USG OF COURSE SUPPORTS RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO DEFEND ITSELF IF DIRECTLY ATTACKED USG DOES NOT BELIEVE THIS RIGHT EXTENDS TO PREEMPTIVE INVASIONS OF SOUTH LEBANON OR VIOLATIONS OF LEBANESE AIRSPACE.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER CONTINUED THAT REAL DANGER NOW IN LEBANON IS POSSIBLE LOSS TO ARAB WORLD OF PRESIDENT ASAD. HE SAID HE FELT THAT IF ISRAELIS TAKE FURTHER ACTIONS -- SUCH AS CONTINUING OVERFLIGHTS OR ANOTHER INVASION -- AND ASAD FAILS TO RESPOND MILITARILY, WHICH HE IS IN NO POSITION TO DO, HE MIGHT WELL BE OVERTHROWN FROM WITHIN THE ARMY. ASAD IS IN DEEP TROUBLE IN LEBANON AND USG SHOULD WORK TO ASSURE THAT ISRAELIS DO NOT FORCE HIM INTO A CORNER FROM WHICH HIS ONLY OPTIONS WOULD BE WAR WITH ISRAEL OR END OF HIS REGIME. SHAIKH MUHAMMAD SAID HE FEARED SITUATION IS MOVING IN THIS DIRECTION AND USG AND FRIENDS IN AREA MUST WORK TO AVERT DISASTER WHICH COULD SO EASILY RESULT. HE SAID IT WOULD BE ALMOST BETTER FOR ASAD TO GET OUT OF LEBANON ENTIRELY NO MATTER WHAT

CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE FOR LEBANESE.

6. COMMENT: SHAIKH MUHAMMAD WOULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT
ON HIS SOURCE FOR INFO IN PARA TWO BUT HE LIVED IN BEIRUT
FOR FIVE YEARS AND PROBABLY IS AS WELL CONNECTED THERE
AS HE IS THROUGHOUT ARAB WORLD.
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